

FOLLOWING IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF THOREAU ON SANDY CAPE COD

More Tourists Have Investigated the Fascinating Conditions of the Bleak Locality This Year Than Ever Before

THE opening of the Cape Cod canal has called attention to the various attractions of that peculiar and bleak locality. More tourists have been investigating the Cape this year than ever before. For their benefit, the Houghton Mifflin Company has just issued a visitors' edition of Thoreau's "Cape Cod."

It was never Thoreau's practice to frequent the villages in his travels. He preferred the seashore and the woods and the wild open places. The visitor who goes to Cape Cod to-day in the spirit of Thoreau may still avoid, as he did, most of the signs of habitation and enjoy the sweep of the sand and the sea, fill his lungs with the fresh air and enjoy the atmosphere of the Cape observing its birds and fishes and trees, its sands and its dunes in very much the same way that Thoreau did, and for those who only the things of nature this is really the best way to see Cape Cod.

When we have returned from the seaside, says Thoreau, we sometimes ask ourselves why we did not spend more time in looking at the sea; but very soon the traveler does not look at the sea more than at the heavens. As for the interior, if the elevated sand in the midst of the ocean can be said to have any interior, it was an exceedingly desolate landscape, with rarely a cultivated or cultivated field in sight. We saw no villages, and seldom a house, for these are generally on the bay side. It was a succession of shrubby hills and valleys, now wearing an autumnal tint. You would frequently think from the character of the surface, the dwarfish trees and the leafless shrubs, that you were on the top of a mountain. The only wood in Eastham was on the edge of Wellfleet. The pitch pines were not commonly more than fifteen or eighteen feet tall. The larger ones were covered with lichens, often hung with the long gray lichen. There is scarcely a white pine on the forearm of the Cape. Yet in the northwest part of Eastham, near the Camp Ground, we saw, in the next summer, some quite rural and even suburban retreats, for the Cape, with small, rustling groves of oaks and beeches and whispering pines, on perfectly level ground, made a little paradise.

The inhabitants of these towns have a great regard for a tree, though their standard for one is necessarily neither large nor high, and when they tell you of the large trees that once grew here you must think of them not as absolutely large, but large compared with the present generation. Their "large oaks" of which they speak with much respect, and which they will point out to you as relics of the primitive forest, two or three, for example, they know 200 years old, have a ridiculously dwarfish appearance which excites a smile in the beholder. The largest and most venerable which they will show you in such a case are twenty-five feet high. I was especially amused in the dilapidated old oaks in

a distant windmill, or a meeting house standing alone, for only they could afford to occupy an exposed place. A great part of the township, however, is a barren, heathlike plain, and perhaps one-third of it lies in common, though the property of individuals. The author of the old "Description of Truro," speaking of the soil, says: "The snow, which would be of essential service to it provided it lay level and covered the ground, is blown into drifts and into the sea." This peculiar open country, with here and there a patch of shrub, bery, extends as much as seven miles, or from Pamet River on the south to High Head on the north and from ocean to bay. To walk over it makes one a stranger such an impression as being at sea, and he finds it impossible to estimate distances in any weather. A wind-mill or a herd of cows may seem to be far away in the horizon, yet after going a few rods he will be close upon them. He is also deluded by other kinds of mirage.

In summer, if the poverty grass grows at the head of a hollow looking toward the sea, in a bleak position where the wind rushes up, the northern or exposed half of the tuft is sometimes black and dead like an oven broom, while the opposite half is yellow with blossoms. The whole hillside thus presenting a remarkable contrast when seen from the poverty stricken and the flourishing side. This plant, which in many places would be esteemed an ornament, is here associated with barrenness. It might well be adopted for the harnessed coat of arms, in a field of battle. I should be proud of it. Here and there were tracts of beach grass mingled with the seaside golden rod and beach pea, which reminded us still more forcibly of the ocean.

We read that there was not a brook in Truro. Yet there were deer here once, which must have panted in vain, but I am pretty sure that I afterwards saw a small fresh water brook emptying into the south side of Pamet River, though I was so heedless as not to taste it. At any rate, a little boy near by told me that he drank at it. There was not a tree as far as we could see, and that was many miles each way, the general level of the upland being about the same everywhere. In the north part of the town there is no house from shore to shore for several miles, and it is as wild and solitary as the Western prairies—used to be. Indeed, one who has seen every house in Truro will be surprised to hear of the number of the inhabitants, but perhaps 500 of the men and boys of this small town were then abroad on their fishing grounds. Only a few men

kept sheep in the town, and in 1855 a Truro boy 10 years old told me that he had never seen one. They were formerly pastured on the unfenced lands or general fields, but now the owners were more particular to fence their rights, and it cost too much for fencing. The rails are cedar from Maine, and two rails will answer for ordinary purposes, but four are required for sheep. This was the reason assigned by one who had formerly kept them for not keeping them any longer. Fencing stuff is so expensive that I saw fences made with only one rail, and very often the rail when split was carefully tied with a string. In one of the villages I saw the next summer a cow tethered by a rope six rods long, the rope long in proportion as the feed was short and thin. Sixty rods, says the cable of the Cape, could have been no more

in length. I witnessed such a scene in July, 1855. A carpenter who was working at the lighthouse arriving early in the morning remarked that he did not know but he had lost \$50 by being late to his work, for as he came along the bay side he heard them driving a school of blackfish ashore, and he had debated with himself whether he should not go and join them and take his share, but had concluded to come to his work.

After breakfast I came over to this place, about two miles distant, and near the beach met some of the fishermen returning from their chase. Looking up and down the shore, I could see about a mile south some large black masses on the sand, which I knew must be blackfish, and a man or two about them. As I walked along toward them I soon

stench compelled me to go a long way round.

When I came to Great Hollow I found a fisherman and some boys on the watch, and counted about thirty blackfish, just killed, with many lance wounds, and the water was more or less bloody around. They were partly on shore and partly in the water, held by a rope round their tails till the tide should leave them. A boat had been somewhat stove by the tail of one. They were a smooth, shining black, like India rubber, and had remarkably simple and lumpy forms for animated creatures, with a blunt round snout or head, whale like, and simple stiff looking flippers. The largest were about fifteen feet long, but one or two were only five feet long, and still without teeth. The fishermen slashed one with his jackknife, to show me how thick the blubber was—about three inches; and as I passed my finger through the cut it was covered thick with oil. The blubber looked like pork, and this man said that when they were trying it the boys would sometimes come round with a piece of bread in one hand, and take a piece of blubber in the other to eat with it, preferring it to pork



A catch of mackerel and butterfish.



Old Mill, Eastham.

that in 1812 blackfish were used as food by the poor of Provincetown. They were waiting for the tide to leave these fishes high and dry, that they might strip off the blubber and carry it to their try works in their boats, where they try it on the beach.

I learned that a few days before this 180 blackfish had been driven ashore in one school at Eastham, a little further south, and that the keeper of Billingsgate Point light went out his morning about the same time and cut his initials on the backs of a large school which had run ashore in the night, and sold his right to them to Provincetown for \$1000, and probably Provincetown made as much more. Another fisherman told me that nineteen years ago 350 were driven ashore in one school at Great Hollow. In the Naturalists Library it is said that in the winter of 1809-10 1,110 "approached the shore of Hvalfjord, Iceland, and were captured." De Kay says it is not known why they are stranded. But one fisherman declared to me that they ran ashore in pursuit of the squid, about the last of July.

About a week afterward, when I came to this shore, it was shown, as far as I could see with a glass, with the carcasses of blackfish straggled with the blubber and the heads cut off, the last lying higher up. Walking on the beach was out of the question on account of the stench.

We had here, as well as all across the Cape, a fair view of Provincetown, five or six miles distant over the water, and the hills under its scrubby sand hills, with its harbor now full of vessels whose masts mingled with the spires of its churches and gave it the appearance of a quite large seaport town.

The inhabitants of all the lower Cape towns enjoy the prospect of two seas, standing on the western or farboard

shore and looking across to where the distant mainland looms, they can say this is Massachusetts Bay, and then after an hour's stammering walk, they may stand on the starboard side, beyond which no land is seen to loom, and say this is the Atlantic Ocean.

A middle-aged man wearing glasses was standing in front of the Harvard Club talking to three or four members.

"By Jove," he said, "it is a common saying that people should not go around telling their troubles, but I want to say that it's me for the man with the troubles every time. When I meet that sort and he pours out a stream of hard luck stories on to me, I listen and try to cheer him up, but all the same, I feel rather good because my luck isn't so hard as his, and I leave him feeling better than if I hadn't seen him."

"On the other hand, just before I joined you chaps I was inside there talking to a fellow who was a classmate of mine and after graduating went to South America. He's been down there fifteen years and has cleaned up a million dollars in mines and is home now with the money to have a good time."

"He was telling me about all the things he had bought and was going to buy, the traps he proposed taking and all these other things that money will get and the splendid health he had to enjoy everything until I simply couldn't stand it any longer and had to get out. All I could think about while he was talking was the hard work I had to do every day and the little I made out of it, and I felt if I didn't get to the open air I'd smother."

"Joy is a good thing and I wish it to everybody of course, but I'd rather listen to the troubles people have than to their joys, believe me."

"Bishop of Wall Street" Highest Paid of Street Preachers

PEDESTRIANS who take the trouble to glance at the ancient building at 34 Varick street, immediately south of old St. John's Chapel, would hardly suspect that for the past ten years it has been used as a perambulatory for tired, abused and generally unappreciated millionaires. The place is not equipped with an elevator and nearly all modern appliances which mitigate the labors of the housekeeper are lacking.

Nevertheless in this house men who "think in millions and act in tens of millions" have on found succor from the troubles of the financial district. Their host, on such occasions is the "Bishop of Wall Street," the Rev. Dr. William Wilkinson, who is said to be the "highest paid but the most modest and self-deprecating street preacher in the world." The late J. Pierpont Morgan, James Stillman, former president of the National City Bank, Henry Clows, the dean of the financial district, and many other well-known men of the "Street" have been his guests at these "millionaires' frolics," as Dr. Wilkinson describes them.

"His title was not given by Wall Street in derision," said Mr. Clows. "He was elevated to the episcopacy by the unanimous consent of the entire financial district. Every operator, every banker, every commercial king, every clerk, stenographer, policeman, barber and bootblack in the Street respects him profoundly. I have no hesitation in saying that he has done us more good than all the other influences combined."

If rewards are to come through service, Dr. Wilkinson ought to be a countess. His congregation is a cosmopolitan and polyglot aggregation. All religious beliefs and almost all countries are represented in the groups which assemble at Broad and Wall streets every day in the year with the exception of Sunday.

Dr. Wilkinson is respected because he does not hesitate to tell the truth. You should hear him say his so-called rich men. He comes into my office occasionally and if he finds anything in my conduct to criticize he frankly and fairly pitches into me. It is impossible to resent his words of reproof even when we feel that we do not deserve such outspoken criticism. He is so earnest, so manly and so evidently sincere and at the same time so gentle, so loving and forbearing that we bare our backs to the rod of reproof with ut attempting to talk back."

For ten years Dr. Wilkinson has conducted services daily at Broad and Wall streets. A representative of the Cunard line hearing him preach one day suggested to his supporters that Dr. Wilkinson should be invited to become the Aquitania's chaplain on the maiden voyage of that boat from New York to England. The suggestion was accepted and an invitation was sent to Dr. Wilkinson.

the sailors, the stewards and "such other common people as may be found on board the ship."

Strangers who come across Dr. Wilkinson while he is conducting services standing on a dry goods box and are inclined to look upon him as an ordinary street preacher would perhaps be surprised to learn that he has at his back the richest church corporation in the world, receives \$5,000 a year for his services and is one of the vicars of Trinity Church.

He spent about twenty-five years of his ministry in Minnesota. There he helped to clean out a gang of grafters and was later elected chaplain of the House of Representatives at St. Paul. It was the first time in the history of the State that an Episcopalian clergyman had been chosen for the place. While serving in that capacity Dr. Wilkinson often met the late Ignatius Don-

nelly and was interested in that philosopher's philippics against Wall Street. One day after listening to an exceptionally bitter diatribe Dr. Wilkinson determined that if Wall Street was half as black as it was painted it needed missionaries more than Africa, Asia or the islands of the seas.

"It determined should the opportunity be afforded to spend the rest of my active ministry within earshot of these wicked millionaires," said Dr. Wilkinson in telling how he happened to come to New York. "Somehow Wall Street presented to me a problem both fascinating and irresistible. Of course I did not believe the Street to be wholly irredeemable, wholly indifferent to the cry of distress and the operators entirely insensible to their moral obligations to the people among whom they lived, but it was evident to my mind that Wall Street needed attention. If Wall

Street wouldn't go where the Gospel was preached I would take the Gospel to the Street."

That the "Bishop of Wall Street" has made good is shown by the fact that Trinity has offered him an increase of salary, which was promptly declined, and has informed him that Wall Street was his as long as he is able to hold forth. He is 66 years old now.

The "Bishop" will not tell you that he lives on about half his allowance from Trinity and gives the balance to the poor and needy. This is a chapter in his career that was described by one of his rich friends. While his mission is to Wall Street and he is spending much of his energy in making "misunderstood and maligned millionaires" happy, he is more at home among the feeble, the down-trodden, the waifs and strays that are to be found in many parts of the city.

It is said of "The Bishop of Wall Street" that he is sometimes found with his coat off and his shirt sleeves rolled up assisting a poor woman in the preparation of a frugal evening meal. He peels the potatoes, washes the dishes or does anything else that is required. While engaged in these little domestic diversions he speaks cheerfully to the children and their mother and brings agreeable sunshine to many a dismal abode.

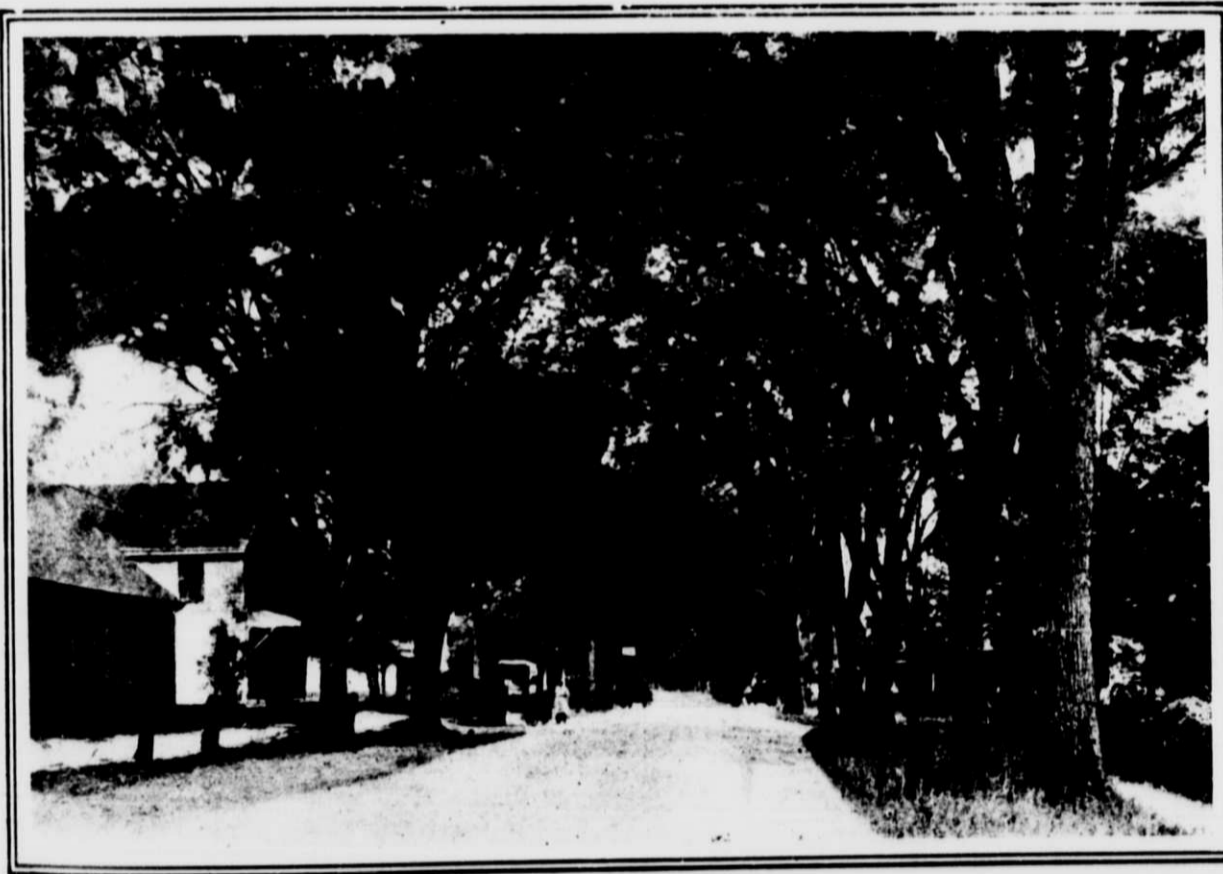
In bidding fare-well to his parishioners prior to taking passage for Europe he said:

"Young men, I am going to leave you for a little while. I have asked the authorities of Trinity for a holiday and they have generously answered my prayer. It is now ten years since I first stood at this spot. Some of my hearers have since then graduated to the penitentiary, others have thought Honduras a more hospitable country than their native land, but the great majority have testified that they have been spiritually and morally benefited by these meetings."

"I will say this, that no man who has taken my teaching seriously and resolved to profit by it has fallen very far short of the standard of citizenship demanded by this great country. For the rest of my life I will be a member of the church that Wall Street and no other pulpits than the curbs or this homely box. I have been happy here and I hope I have made others happy."

"There is no question about my making others happy," said Henry Clows. "I know of a bank which employs 150 men, all of whom willingly say they are better husbands, better employees and better citizens because of the ministrations of this humble but sincere man. He can retire from his arduous duties here at any time and take a pulpit, but there is no inducement which would be strong enough to make him consent to the change."

"There is much more money spent on charity by Wall Street—and I mean by Wall Street the entire financial district—than people generally suspect. And there is a great deal more distributed in this way than in former years. For this Dr. Wilkinson is largely responsible. Much of the ruin that is afflicting the methodical manner and many of the recipients are in total ignorance of the source of their supplies and the names of their benefactors."



A Street in Yarmouth.

the north part of Truro. To the inexperienced eye, which appreciated their plainness only, they might appear as a forest, which saved his royal majesty, but measured they were dwarfed at once almost into lichens which, under might eat up in a morning. You will find that large shrubs were once built of timber which grew in Wellfleet. The old houses also stand at the foot of the Cape; but instead of the forests in the midst of which they originally stood, barren hills with poverty grass for heather, now stretch away on every side.

Looking southward from the lighthouse the Cape appeared like an elevated plateau, sloping very regularly, almost slightly downward from the edge of the bank on the Atlantic side, about the feet above the ocean, to that of the bay side. On traversing this we found it to be interrupted by broad valleys or gullies, which became the valleys in the bank when the sea has withdrawn from them. They are commonly at right angles with the shore, and extend quite across the Cape. Some of the valleys, however, are circular, some feet deep, without any outlet, as if the Cape had sunk in the focus of a volcano had run out. The few scattered bushes which we passed, being placed at the bottom of the hollows, for shrubs and fertility, were for the most part, crowded entirely, as much as if they had been swallowed up in the earth. Every village with its meeting house, which we had left little more than a shadow behind, had sunk into the earth, and all that we saw only the surface of the upland and the sea on either hand. When approaching it we had mistaken the bluff for a summer house on the plain. We began to think that we must tumble into a chasm, and then we were aware of it, as if an iron bar had been drawn across the sand irretrievably. The most conspicuous objects on the land were

stay at home to till the sand or watch for blackfish. The farmers are better fishermen and the undermen fatter ploughing the sea than the land. They do not disturb their sands much, though here is a plenty of seaweed. Between occasionally rotting on the shore. Between the pond and East Harbor Village there was an interesting plantation of pitch pines, twenty or thirty acres in extent, like those which we had already seen from the stage. One who lived near said that the land was purchased by two men for a deed for, or twenty-five cents an acre. Some is not considered worth writing a deed for. This soil or sand, which was partially covered with poverty and beach grass, sorrel, &c., was furrowed at intervals of about four feet and the seed dropped by a machine. The pines had come up admirably and the first year grew three or four inches, and the second six inches and inches, and the seed had been lately planted. The white sand was freshly exposed in an endless furrow winding round and round the sides of the deep hollows in a vertical, spiral manner, which produced a very singular effect, as if you were looking into the reverse side of a vast banded shield. This experiment, so important to the Cape, appeared very successful, and perhaps the time will come when the greater part of this kind of land in Barnstable county will be thus covered with an artificial pine forest, as has been done in some parts of France. In that country 12,500 acres of down had been thus covered in 1811 near Bayonne. They are called "consignados," and according to the inhabitants, where there was a drifting desert before. It seemed a nobler kind of grain to raise than corn ever.

A few years ago Truro was remarkable for blackfish (the social whale, Globicephalus melas, de Kay; called also black hake fish, nowling whale, bottle head, &c.), fifteen feet or more than fair. Tethered in the desert for fear that she would get into Arabia Felix? I helped a man weigh a bundle of hay which he was selling to his neighbor, holding one end of a pole from which it swung by a steel yard hook, and this was just half his whole stock. In short, the country looked so barren that I several times refrained from asking the inhabitants for a string of beads or a piece of wrapping paper for four or five of them, for they plainly were obliged to import these things as well as rails, and where there were no newboys I did not see what they would do for waste paper.

A great proportion of the inhabitants of the Cape are always thus abroad about their teaming on some ocean highway or other, and the history of one of their ordinary trips could cast the Argonautic expedition into the shade. I have just heard of a Cape Cod captain who was expected home in the beginning of the winter from the West Indies, but was long since given up for lost, till his relations at length have heard with joy that after getting within forty miles of Cape Cod light he was driven back by nine successive gales, and was once again shaping his course for home. Thus he spent his winter. In ancient times the adventures of these two or three men and boys would have been made the basis of a myth, but now such tales are crowded into a line of shorthand signs like an algebraic formula in the shipping news. "Wherever over the world," said Palfrey in his oration at Barnstable, you see the Stars and Stripes floating, you may have good hope that beneath them some one will be found who can tell the soundings of Barnstable or Wellfleet or Chatham harbor."

In summer and fall sometimes hundreds of blackfish (the social whale, Globicephalus melas, de Kay; called also black hake fish, nowling whale, bottle head, &c.), fifteen feet or more



Rev. Dr. William Wilkinson, "Bishop of Wall Street."